

What is Weird?

“One who is too insistent on his own ideas finds few agree with him”

—Sensei Wu

When Lego created Ninjago, masters of Spinjitzu, I don't think they realized just how much attention they would draw from the older crowd (such as me). First, I will begin with the background information. Please enjoy and do not take anything personally. (I don't like it when people take things personally)

The history of Ninjago starts in the first realm where you are introduced to the First Spinjitzu Master (FSM), who is the father of Wu and Garmadon, and Firstbourne, mother of all dragons. What is Spinjitzu? Spinjitzu is, “A power as old as time itself” in Wu's words, “It is a weapon, but not the sort you can hold in your hand. If you were to watch someone practice it, you would watch as they whirled and spun until they became a tornado of elemental power. Spinjitzu is not something you can create it is only something you can find inside of your self.” (disclaimer) Spinjitzu is very dangerous and difficult to learn and practice. If done improperly it can lead to serious injury and possibly even death.

The First Spinjitzu Master first created the Golden weapons from with a special and elemental-conducting gold from the “Golden Peaks” (I don't remember if the Golden Peaks ever made an appearance in the show). After the help of Firstbourne's fire, the golden weapons were completed. The four Golden Weapons included the scythe of quakes the shurikens of ice the sword of fire and the nunchuks of lightning. After the FSM Created Ninjago with the four weapons, he ended up fleeing to it as an attempt to escape from the Oni, who were at war with the dragons and FSM. The Oni perused the FSM and created their temple to use as a hideout. The Oni were not heard of or mentioned again until the later seasons 8-10. Sadly, Evil spread and appeared in Ninjago and the battle between the Over Lord, Wojira, who was an evil serpent with the power of wind and wave, and the Masters of Spinjitzu began.

On Culture and Arguments Concerning Culture

Since we have gotten all of the background information out of the way, we can dig deeper and begin to discuss the culture and arguments concerning Ninjago (All of the information about Japanese culture is from the secondary source google, if you would like to dig even deeper then be my guest). One of the discussions concerning Ninjago, which is based off of a Japanese culture, is the

fact that Lego disrespects the cultures of the Japanese by moderating it and adapting it for westerners. I can see that in the first few seasons but, I don't think Lego was trying to be hurtful or disrespectful at all. Thankfully, when you arrive at the later seasons, you began to see improvements in these areas. You see this in 8-15. Another thing that some people get heated up over are the dragons. The dragons in Japanese lore are considered to be signs of peace, wisdom, nature, and value. While the dragons in Ninjago do not look like the Japanese dragons or symbolism the same thing, they are the protectors and friends of the FSM and Ninja, and do fight against the Oni. Speaking of the Oni, Oni are evil in almost every Japanese culture except for a story called Naita akaoni, which describes them as good. Also, concerning their title as ninja, people get angry about them having the title of Ninja because, ninja are spies and tend to be more secretive, while the ninja in Ninjago are more like Samuri. They do struggle with this in the earlier seasons but, them being spies and secretive is actually mentioned several times throughout the later seasons. Here is just one of them from season 8.

While on lookout:

Person 1. "I can't see them."

Person 2. "Of course you can't! They're Ninja, They don't like to be seen."

I hope you enjoyed the arguments about culture, they do tend to get a little exciting don't they?

On names

Since I discussed culture, I might as well discuss names and how they relate to their roles. I will start with the characters as they appear. You first are introduced to Kai and Nya Smith, who are brother and sister. The name Kai has several meanings but the first one that appeared while I was searching was "Ocean". I had to laugh because, ironically, Kai is the master of fire and his sister, Nya, is the master of water. The second meaning that popped up was "Chief Title."

Although that is also pretty ironic, it does make sense. (Kai struggled to accept the fact that he wasn't the destined Green Ninja in the first season). Moving on, the meaning of the name Nya is "Purpose" which does make sense because she was

the key to defeating Morro in season 5 and Wojiera in season 15. (Nya felt like she had no purpose because she felt left out before Sensei Wu told her she was the master of water). The next character who appears is Cole, master of earth(RIP Kirby Morrow). The meaning for the name Cole is “Swarthy, coal black” which would be correct because Cole is the black ninja. Next is Jay, the blue ninja, master of lightning. Rightfully, Jay means “chatter” in Greek. Enough said, lets move on to Zane, the master of ice. Since Zane is the common sense of the group I found this definition to be fitting. Zane means “God is gracious” or “Gift from God.” As we move on, we meet Sensei Wu, who’s name means “Military, martial.” We also find Garmadon, who’s name means “Giver of Darkness.” I find that very fitting. Lastly, we meet Lloyd, the Green Ninja. Lloyd’s name means “Wisdom” or “Sacred” and is usually given to someone who is entitled to respect. One more thing, since Garmadon is Lloyd's last name but it is Garmadon’s first, what is Garmadon’s full name? Is it, Garmadon Garmadon Garmadon, or, just Garmadon Garmadon? No one knows. Anyways, there are plenty more names in Ninjago, but I decided to only do the main characters and as you can see, their names are either hilariously ironic or very much relate to their roles in the series.

On True Potentials

“In each and every one of us, there are obstacles that hold us back. Only when you conquer that fear, will your heart be free.” -Sensei Wu

Finally, I am going to discuss the Ninja’s true potentials and what it showed about each one of them. First off, what is the meaning of a True Potential? In each person there is a mental obstacle that holds you back. That obstacle is the one thing that keeps you from fulfilling your True Potential. True Potentials often cause an increase of elemental power and strength. (The following True Potentials are in order). When you first begin Ninjago, you automatically realize that Zane is clearly different from the rest of Sensei Wu’s chosen students. Since he didn’t really have a sense of humor, which Jay tried to help him with, and was considerably “Strange,” the others began to wonder about his past and where he came from. In the episode “Tick Tock,” Zane grew curious about a falcon that seemed to be following him and the others. He ended up deciding to follow it which lead him to discovering his past and who he was. Because Zane discovered who he was, the mental barrier which blocked him was gone. Zane later unlocked

his True Potential and quickly rescued the other ninja from an aggressive group of Treehorns. In the episode “Once bitten, Twice shy,” Jay was afraid to be himself because he was trying to impress Nya. But when they were trapped and about to crash on a broken roller coaster during an attack from the serpentine, Nya told Jay, “What ever happens next just remember, you are the best you.” When Jay heard that, he unlocked his True Potential which enabled him to fly and stop the roller coaster, saving Nya and everyone else on it. Cole was the next to unlock his True Potential when he saved his father, who he had hated his whole life, in the episode “The Royal Blacksmiths.” Kai came last. Kai still hadn’t unlocked his True Potential and was more than jealous of the others. Kai still thought that being last managed to make him the Green Ninja and leader over all the others though. He finally unlocked his True Potential in the episode “The Green Ninja” when he rescues Lloyd and realizes that Lloyd is the Green Ninja. Finally, Lloyd unlocks his True Potential in the episode “Rise of The Spinjitzu Master” as he faces his father, Garmadon, who was under control of the Over Lord. Nya unlocks her true potential when she realizes that she can’t let past mistakes hold her back and saves all of Ninjago by defeating the Preeminent in the episode “CurseWorld, Part 2.” Garmadon managed to unlock his true potential in season 9 in the episode “True Potential.” Because Garmadon is both Oni and Dragon he unlocked his twice. The second time it was unlocked was in season 10.

Conclusion:

Since your probably bored, I am going to give you a few facts, which you should find interesting. I have come to a conclusion that a lot of people have seen Ninjago, because I have asked a few, but, because of the poor quality and bad animation in the first season, they all found it stupid and like all of Lego’s other creations. Curiously, the animation in Ninjago is smooth and unlike all of the other Lego movies or shows I have seen, which looks more like stop-motion. I wonder why? When the animation improves in the newer seasons, you almost forget they’re Legos. Because they are Legos, you’d think they wouldn’t apply the laws of physics like Lego did in their other movies and shows, but since they did, it’s a lot more fun to watch and it made the action scenes more enjoyable. They’re sixteen realms total in the world of Ninjago. The Ninja have visited two

(except for Lloyd). Zane and Lloyd have a longer life-span, like Garmadon and Wu, because Zane is an upgraded robot and Lloyd is both Oni and Dragon. They actually use real weapons in all the seasons except for season 3, which was when they used the Techno-blades. These aren't even close to all the intriguing things in Ninjago. But I must stop now or there will be too many.

As I come to a close, just remember. Out of all the things you have read here today, the point is, You cannot judge something by its first appearance.

“What is weird? Someone who is different, or someone who is different than you.”

-Sensei Wu